

votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2647) "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2010 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, to provide special pays and allowances to certain members of the Armed Forces, expand concurrent receipt of military retirement and VA disability benefits to disabled military retirees, and for other purposes."

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 704

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H. Res. 704.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3619 and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2010

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 853 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3619.

□ 1817

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3619) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, with Mrs. DAHLKEMPER in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) each will control 20 minutes; the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) and the gen-

tleman from New York (Mr. KING) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Chair, I yield myself 4 minutes in strong support of H.R. 3619, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010, the annual authorization for the Coast Guard, which we have several times passed in the House, but which the other body has not acted upon.

It's unfortunate that the Coast Guard has gone so many years without a formal authorization bill. The appropriation committees, which I applaud, in both previous Republican management and the past 2 years under Democratic leadership, the appropriation committees have continued authority for Coast Guard programs and provided funding to previously established levels. But the Coast Guard needs the legislative framework. It needs the policy framework that we provide in the authorizing legislation.

We have passed essentially this bill in the 110th Congress. We are now going to do it again, I am quite confident. We have wonderful bipartisan support, and I am very earnestly hoping and working, talking to our colleagues in the other body, to get their action so we can send this bill to the President for his signature.

And to that end, I express my very great appreciation to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) who is the senior Republican on the committee and who has been a partner in working, not only this legislation, but many, many other bills that we have brought through committee to the House floor and through to signature by the President, including even an occasion where we had to override a Presidential veto.

I express great appreciation to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) who has taken on the responsibility of chairing the Coast Guard Subcommittee. The gentleman has applied himself diligently and vigorously to understand the workings of the Coast Guard, the issues of their mission, the needs of the various Coast Guard districts and of headquarters and has spent enormous amounts of time in chairing subcommittee hearings on the needs and issues of the Coast Guard and those maritime activities that depend upon or are regulated by the Coast Guard.

And I express appreciation to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO), who in a previous Congress has chaired this subcommittee and was fair-minded, evenhanded and very diligent and has been a splendid partner in shaping the bill that we bring to the House, to the Committee of the Whole, today.

Our bill authorizes \$10 billion for the Coast Guard for fiscal 2010. It will increase the total end strength of the Coast Guard by 1,500 service personnel to a level of 47,000. Now that, I just have to point out, that compares to 39,000 authorized personnel in 1975, my

first year in Congress, my first year in which I also served on the then-Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and on the Coast Guard Subcommittee. But since that time, Congress has added 27 new missions and responsibilities for the Coast Guard without substantially increasing the personnel or the funding for the Coast Guard to carry out those missions.

Now, the men and women who wear that unique color of blue uniform have prided themselves on being a multi-mission agency, and they have prided themselves on being able to carry out all these many responsibilities. But they are working shorthanded, they are working underfunded and they need this authorization bill, and they need this increased service personnel strength that we provide in the bill before us.

We authorized \$153 million for the design and construction of a new replacement icebreaker for the Great Lakes.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield myself an additional 2 minutes.

Last year, we had the situation where ships were moving in the upper lake, Lake Superior, and through the Sioux Locks beset with heavy ice cover, while the icebreaker Mackinaw was in the lower lakes on icebreaking mission. The Coast Guard has been provided funding for and have operated harbor icebreakers. Well, fine, they can operate in the harbor, they can move slush ice around, but they can't break the big ice. And when our iron ore needs to move from the upper lake to the lower lakes steel mills, it's got to get through that heavy ice. And we need an icebreaker on duty in both the upper lake and the lower lakes. And this legislation will provide funding for a second major Mackinaw-class icebreaker.

Last year, U.S.-flag vessels that were moving coal, critical for lower lakes power plants, coal that comes all the way by train from the Duluth River Basin to the lake head of Duluth-Superior, those ships and our iron ore vessels sustained one plus—1½ to a larger million dollars in damages to hulls because of a decreased icebreaking capability of the Coast Guard. Five of the Coast Guard's smaller size, 1,200-horsepower capability vessels are at the end of their service life. We need a Mackinaw-class vessel on the Great Lakes in addition to the one that is now operating.

We, in this bill, respond to the many shortcomings in Coast Guard acquisition efforts over the past several years and require the Coast Guard to develop lifecycle cost estimates for assets that will cost more than \$10 million, have a service life of at least 10 years, will prohibit contractors self-certification, an issue that arose in a 10-hour hearing Chairman CUMMINGS conducted, Mr. LOBIONDO was a part of this hearing.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has again expired.